

CLAIMS

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1 1. A method for multicasting a message to agents, comprising the
2 steps of:
3 receiving a packet comprising a message and preferential
4 destination information designated by a user;
5 determining to which agents said message is to be sent, by
6 referring to said preferential destination information; and
7 sending said message to the agents determined as destinations.

1 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said determining
2 step further comprises a step of: referring to messaging policy
3 data defining priorities of agents to which said message can be
4 sent.

1 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said messaging
2 policy data is defined for each type of message.

1 4. The method according to claim 2, wherein said messaging
2 policy data defines the number of agents which receive the message
3 for each type of message.

1 5. The method according to claim 2, wherein said determining
2 step further comprises a step of: using said priorities of agents
3 defined in said messaging policy data and pairs of agent names and
4 priorities included in said preferential destination information to
5 determine destination agents from an agent having highest priority.

1 6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising a
2 step of: sending information concerning agents which are not
3 determined as destination agents and said message to a
4 representative agent which represents agents to which said message
5 can be sent.

1 7. The method according to claim 2, further comprising a
2 step of: sending information concerning agents which are not
3 determined as destination agents and said message to a
4 representative agent which represents agents to which said message
5 can be sent.

1 8. The method according to claim 6, wherein said
2 representative agent generates a response message for a source
3 agent of a message, by referring to information from preregistered
4 agents to which said message can be sent.

1 9. The method according to claim 7, wherein said
2 representative agent generates a response message for a source
3 agent of a message, by referring to information from preregistered

4 agents to which said message can be sent.

1 10. A computer comprising:
2 an execution environment for agents; and
3 a message monitor for receiving a packet, comprising a message
4 and preferential destination information designated by a user, from
5 an agent being active in the execution environment for said agents,
6 and for determining to which agent said message is to be sent by
7 referring to said preferential destination information, and for
8 sending said messages to the agents determined as destination
9 agents.

1 11. The computer according to claim 10, further comprising:
2 a storage device storing a messaging policy data defining
3 priorities of agents to which said message can be sent.

1 12. The computer according to claim 11, wherein said message
2 monitor determines, by using said priorities of agents defined in
3 said messaging policy data and pairs of agent names and priorities
4 included in said preferential destination information, destination
5 agents from an agent having highest priority.

1 13. The computer according to claim 10, wherein said message
2 monitor sends information concerning agents which are not
3 determined as destination agents and said message to a
4 representative agent which represents agents to which said message

5 can be sent.

1 14. The computer according to claim 11, wherein said message
2 monitor sends information concerning agents which are not
3 determined as destination agents and said message to a
4 representative agent which represents agents to which said message
5 can be sent.

1 15. A storage medium for storing a program executable by a
2 machine for causing the machine to perform method steps for
3 multicasting a message to agents, said method comprising the steps
4 of:

5 receiving a packet comprising a message and preferential
6 destination information designated by a user;

7 determining to which agents said message is to be sent, by
8 referring to said preferential destination information; and

9 sending said message to the agents determined as destinations.

1 16. The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein said
2 determining step comprises a step of: referring to a messaging
3 policy data defining priorities of agents to which said message can
4 be sent.

1 17. The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein said
2 program further comprises a step of: sending information
3 concerning agents which are not determined as destinations and said

4 message to a representative agent which represents agents to which
5 said message can be sent.

1 18. The storage medium according to claim 16, wherein said
2 program further comprises a step of: sending information
3 concerning agents which are not determined as destinations and said
4 message to a representative agent which represents agents to which
5 said message can be sent.

1 19. A method for multicasting a message to agents, comprising
2 the steps of:
3 receiving a message;
4 determining to which agents said message is to be sent, by
5 referring to a messaging policy data defining priorities of agents
6 to which said message can be sent; and
7 sending said message to the agents determined as destinations.

1 20. A storage medium for storing a program for causing a
2 machine to execute the steps of a method for multicasting a message
3 to an agent, said method comprising the steps of:
4 receiving a message;
5 determining to which agents said message is to be sent, by
6 referring to a messaging policy data defining priorities of agents
7 to which said message can be sent; and
8 sending said message to the agents determined as destinations.